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ROTTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
WEST GERMAN CONVICTED IN WILSON EXPLOSIVES CASE
BY ROLAND DE LIGNY

A Dutch court on Tuesday sentenced a West German to a year in prison for illegally storing explosives. Prosecutors claimed ex- CIA agent Edwin C. Wilson planned to supply the material to European terrorist organizations.

Wolfgang Steiniger, 37, was convicted of keeping more than 100 pounds of plastic explosive at his Rotterdam shipping company, Whestship, in Rotterdam.

During the trial, which started in October, Rotterdam prosecutor Rudolf Gerding said the explosives were shipped from Libya for distribution to terrorist groups, which he did not name.

In testimony during January, a witness identified in court as U.S. Army Capt. Peter Goulding testified for the defense that he had arranged for Steiniger to store the explosives.

At the time the deal was made, the officer said, he was working for Wilson, an ex- CIA agent who was later convicted in the United States for attempted murder and illegally smuggling firearms and explosives to Libya.

Rotterdam police discovered the explosives in December 1982, acting on a tip from the FBI. The plastic explosive, identified as C-4, was hidden in three barrels marked "drilling mud," a substance used to cool oil drilling bits.

During October testimony, Steiniger maintained that when the officer first approached him in 1978, he believed the operation was sponsored by the CIA and that Rotterdam was used as a transit point with the consent of the Dutch government.

Goulding testified that he assumed he was working for the CIA when he was hired by Wilson. He said he discovered "only in the final stage" that Wilson was involved in illegal activities.

The officer noted in court that he was cooperating with American authorities in the Wilson case.

Steiniger, a longtime resident of the Netherlands, also told the court he only became aware of Wilson's illegal activities at the end of 1982.

But the Rotterdam court said Tuesday that Steiniger had cooperated with Wilson's organization "for his personal financial gain." And it added that he had "seriously jeopardized public safety" in the Netherlands by storing the plastic explosives.

The court said it had taken into account that Steiniger had been financially ruined by his involvement in the explosives deal. Whestship went bankrupt last year after Steiniger had been taken into custody.

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Last year, Wilson, 57, was convicted in U.S. federal court of attempted murder in a plot to kill two federal prosecutors. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison.

In 1982, Wilson was sentenced to a 15-year prison term for smuggling four handguns and an M-16 automatic rifle to Libyan agents in Africa and Europe. He was sentenced to a second 15-year term that year for smuggling 20 tons of explosives to Libya in 1977.